

ON REGIONAL STYLE IN GEORGIAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC /SVANETI/

Georgian musical folklore is characterized not only by vocal polyphony but also by a diversity of regional styles (musical dialects). Traditional music of different regions (historical administrative-territorial units), of every ethnographic group (part of a single, integral ethnos) forms a certain musical-dialectal unit expressing the regional musical style of the given geographical area.

This paper deals with Svaneti, a province of the western part of Georgia. The topic of our discussion is a musical dialect, or, to be more exact, the regional style reflected in instrumental music.

Georgian musical dialectology, as a separate branch of musicology, has not been fully established yet, though the foundation for its study has already been laid. Today Georgian musical dialectology is a part of ethnomusicology, and in fact has been assimilated by ethnomusicologists.

The notion of "dialect" is borrowed in musicology from linguistics. According to the reference books and special literature dialect is a branch of the common language of the people, with common features with the "mother language" and with some of its own characteristic traits. A dialect contains even smaller dialectal units (accent, utterance, turn of speech), (I. Gigineishvili et al., 1961:XIX; Jorbenadze, 1989:7).

The notion "musical dialect" means a unity of various stylistic features of traditional musical culture widespread in a certain area (Goshovski, 1969:41).

Bela Bartok (1881-1945) is considered to be a founder of musical dialectology. But much earlier, in his work published in the Russian language (D. Arakishvili, 1905), D. Arakishvili (1873-1953) in fact, laid the foundation of musical dialectology - he began to study Georgian traditional music according to separate dialects. He treated traditional music of separate regions as an independent dialectal unit. At the same time Arakishvili emphasized the unity of different Georgian dialects, underlining their common "origin", and the common "seeds" (Arakishvili, 1925:5).

Zakharia Paliashvili also referred to the differences between the dialects of various regions, never forgetting their common features (see Kashmadze, 1948:109-110).

Grigol Chkhikvadze's classification of Georgian musical dialects, like that of D. Arakishvili, coincides with the classification scheme of the language dialects, i.e. it is based on the principle of the division according to the ethnographic groups (Gr. Chkhikvadze, 1960:4)

Sh. Aslanishvili's dialectal classification is based on the forms of polyphony. (Aslanishvili, 1957:411).

V. Gvakharia defined two groups of Georgian dialects: one - eastern Georgian, the other western Georgian. He paid attention to a very important fact: Svan and Megrelian, differing from each other linguistically (as different languages) are dialects from a musical point of view (Gvakharia, 1962:4).

I have dedicated a few articles to the classification of Georgian musical dia-

lects (Shilakadze, 1979, 1996, 1998) in which I have summed up ideas on the topic. I have also made some attempts to define the theoretical basis for the classification principle. Since then the sphere of ethnomusicology has been enriched by quite a few interesting works.

N. Maisuradze dedicated a special work to the problems of Georgian musical dialects (Maisuradze, 1882, 1989). She presented a concept about the development of the Georgian root musical language, and its division into different musical dialects (Maisuradze, 1990:107).

In the classification of Georgian musical dialects E. Chokhanelidze specially underlines the role of the types and forms of polyphony (Chokhanelidze, 1986:22).

In his work E. Garakanidze distinguishes a complex of stylistic features (comprising the prevailing type of polyphony, the level of its development, harmony, scale, chords, cadences, melodies, intonation formulas, time, rhythm, tempo, manner of performance, structure, genre, repertoire and the text). E. Garaqanidze, like his predecessors, thinks that the most important features are the type of polyphony and the level of its development (E. Garakanidze, 1990).

Thus, the classification scheme of musical dialects generally coincides with that of the language dialects. A correction was introduced by V. Gvakharia, who suggested that a musical dialect covered a larger geographical area than the language dialect did. For instance Kartlian and Kakhetian language dialects are different whereas from the musical point of view they are the same (Gvakharia, 1962:4; Sh. Aslanishvili 1970). In this connection I have suggested a notion of accent as a smaller unit than the musical dialect unit (Shilakadze, 1979:89).

Every dialect or group of kindred dialects has a tendency to have a dominant instrument. For instance in eastern Georgian dialects it is the panduri, a stringed instrument (three-string long-neck lute), in the lowland dialects of western Georgia - the chonguri, also a stringed instrument (four string long-neck instrument), in Svaneti it is the chuniri, a bowed instrument (this instrument is known in the highland regions of western Georgia, e.g. Racha, and in the mountainous regions of eastern Georgia - Tusheti and Khevsureti). A lyre-like instrument, the changi has been preserved only in Svaneti.

Svaneti, the highest mountainous region of western Georgia, is situated on the southern slopes of the central part of the main Caucasian mountain range and on both inclines of the Svaneti mountain range parallel with the Caucasus. The Svaneti range divides Svaneti into two parts - Upper and Lower Svaneti, which are situated in the basins of the Enguri and Tskhenidskali rivers respectively.

The Bali mountain range divides Upper Svaneti into Bals-zemo (above the Bali) and Balskvemo (below the Bali) Svaneti.

Four dialects can be identified in Svaneti: Balszemouri (above the Bali) Balskvemouri (below the Bali), Upper Svanetian dialects in the Enguri basin, and Lower Svaneti in the Tskhenidskali gorge (Topuria, 1931:9; Oniani, 1998:8). The difference between the dialects can be found in phonetics, morphology, syntax and vocabulary (A. Shanidze, V. Topuria, 1939:8). The main basis for distinguishing the dialects is the differences in the vowel system (Shanidze, 1981:321-322). In the Svan language the differences coincide with those in everyday realities in the given area. That is why ethnologists, like linguists, give preference to the study of the ethnographical materials of Svaneti

taking into consideration the local characteristics (Kharadze, Robakidze, 1964, p. 15-16; Bardavelidze, 1939, p. 12).

Judging by the ethnographic and linguistic data it is clear that they should be discussed separately according to the areas of the dissemination of the dialects of the Svan language.

It should be remembered that each dialect of the Svan language reveals its own tendency towards differentiation. In different gorges and villages more subtle local differences can be noticed (Shanidze, Topuria, 1939:XIV).

In the Svan musical dialect so far no case of differentiation between smaller dialectal units has ever been stated in scholarly literature, but intra-dialectal differences have been defined to some extent. This is attested to by one of the remarks of D. Arakishvili which he made in general, not as a result of a purposeful dialectal research: "We, first of all, speak about Svanetian songs in general, not touching upon Lower Svaneti where the affinity to the traditional music of Racha and Lechkhumi can be noted" (Arakishvili, 1950:13).

From this point of view "Svanuri Naduri" (Svan harvest song) studied by Ilya Paliani, deserves special attention. The song has an inscription "Lower Svanetian Dialect" (Archives, Svaneti, N1779).

To define existing or non-existing differentiation within the Svan musical dialect, or to determine the existence of an accent, a smaller unit than a dialect, it is necessary to thoroughly study a genre (to study it in every community, village or gorge), and also to study all the songs of the given genre.

The presented paper is based on the samples of Svan traditional music published in V. Akhobadze's collection of Svanetian traditional songs (Akhobadze, 1957) which are kept in the archives of the Folklore Department of the Scientific Methodological Centre of People's Art. It turned out that in different villages only a few same songs were recorded. These are: Kviria (Lenjeri in Balszemo Svaneti and Pari in Balskvemo Svaneti) Barbar Dolash (Mestia, Lanchvali, Both in Balszemo Svaneti), Lament (Muzhali, Ushguli - in Balszemo Svaneti; Sasashi, in Lashkheti community, Pari - in Balsqvemo Svaneti).

There are just a couple of tunes and songs accompanied by musical instruments; "Dala Kojas Khelghvazhale" accompanied by a bowed instrument Chuniri ("Dali gives birth to a child on a rock", song N74 on p. 129 in Akhobadze, 1957), "Oh, Sabrela Manqsur Jachvlian" (song N3, p. 81), "Oridiashu" (song N4, p. 88), "Mirangula", sung in three parts, is accompanied by the Chuniri (bowed instrument) and the Changi (lyre. Akhobadze, 1957:60). There are also instrumental tunes - "A Melody for the Changi", "A Melody for the Chuniri" (Arakishvili, 1950, N27, No 28), "Sozar Tsioq" (Archives, N1824), "Vorirusha" (Archives, N1835).

As for the archived audio-recordings some are still to be transcribed. According to the available material certain conclusions can be reached.

Svan instrumental tunes consist of two parts with occasional three parts. Two parts are built on parallel fifths. In "Mirangula", sung in three parts with the accompaniment of the chuniri and changi, the chuniri is in unison with the vocal part and the changi accompanies them.

The samples of the Svan instrumental music follow the main elements of harmonic functions (I, VII, I₄₅ of the eolian scale, step 7).

The Svan instruments, like other dialects, reflect the main characteristic features of the given dialect (the form of polyphony, cadences, chords, melody - intonational and rhythmic peculiarities).

The Chuniri tunes (and the changi tunes as well) in most cases are transcription of vocal melodies of round dances. Instrumental music reveals its tendency towards the dancing genre. At the same time the tunes are two-part, three-part or mixed (two parts with the elements of three parts - most often this occurs in the accompaniment). Parallel fifths, semi-cadences (conditioned by the frequent repetition of the musical structure) are very characteristic. At the same time, the tonic basis, as a rule, is represented by fifth consonance, the 7th step as a triad. Svan songs are characterized by the so-called expanded 7th step (the sequence of I, VII = I (I₆₄), I = VII, I; constructed on the basis of the 7th step).

Instrumental melodies in fact are instrumental versions of three-part songs. This was also noted by V. Akhobadze (Alhobadze, 1957).

According to the suggestion of some scholars, the earlier Svan culture and language covered a larger territory, namely the northern part of the east Georgian highlands (region Khevi) as well. N. Maisuradze specially stressed this (Maisuradze, 1989:50-51). Historiography suggests that the "Dsanari" tribe populated the territory of Khevi in the Dariali gorge (Lordkipanidze, 1954:32-34; Muskhelishvili, 1977:189). N. Marr's and S. Kakabadze's assumption about the Dsanars' belonging to the Svan tribe has been supported by other written sources (Gvasalia, 1970:753-756). In this context the existence of stylistic features of Svan traditional singing in the Mokhebian musical dialect is of great importance (Maisuradze, 1989:50-51). The common character of the Khevi and Svan musical cultures is further supported by the archaeological findings in the Kazbegi hoard (6th c. BC): a small figure of a musician with a harp-like instrument which is identical to the Svanetian Changi. I could refer to other examples of the coincidence of the Svan and Mokhebian cultures, such as the colour symbolism reflected in ancient customs and traditions (Giorgadze, 1987:75), and linguistic data, based on the identical phonetic phenomena in the accents of the Svan language and in the Mokhebian dialect (T. Putkaradze, 1998:261).

The relationship of the Svan changi with the musical instrument from the bronze figure discovered in the Qazbegi hoard in the territory of Khevi is revealed not only by their configuration and their typological identity, but also by the coincidence of details. These include separate moving rings (simulating a chain?) on the Qazbegi musician, which as rudiments or remains have survived in the design of the Svan changi. It is well known that a chain also has a ritual significance. In Svan churches there are silver chains of various sizes and shapes donated to the church together with crosses, icons and other churchware (E. Taqaishvili, 1910:157, Silogava, 1986:269-270). It might be controversial to try to prove the connections between the chains donated to the church and the moving rings in the design of the musical instrument, but this ring, as a symbol of a chain, brings up this association. The moving ring on the Svan changi and other circular symbols must be an imitation of a chain (of its rings). The moving

ring of the Svan changi, which now has only an aesthetic function, is associated with the whole composition of the bronze artefact of the Qazbegi hoard with the main principle of the plot it depicts.

“The Svan language is typologically the closest to the common Georgian root language... It occupies a special place among the Kartvelian languages by its morphological structure... It retains the archaic structural features characteristic of all common Kartvelian linguistic situations” (Gamqrelidze, Machavariani, 1965:361-363).

These words can be freely applied to the Svan musical dialect as well.

Translated by LIANA GABECHAVA.

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